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SUBJECT: DIET PASSES LAW TO AID VICTIMS OF AUM SHINRIKYO
ATTACKS

¶1. The Diet passed a law on June 11 to provide financial compensation from the government to approximately 4,000 victims of crimes committed by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in the 1990's. The law stipulates that the government has the right to seek financial compensation from Aum's successor organization, known as Aleph, for the amount of money it pays to the victims. Since Aum declared bankruptcy in 1996, it has only paid about 1.52 billion yen (14.3 million dollars), or 40 percent, of the full 3.8 billion yen (35.9 million dollars) owed in compensation to victims of Aum-related acts of violence. (Note: Creditors ended bankruptcy proceedings against Aum in March 2008 but the creditors will meet on November 26 for a final review of Aum financial reports before the proceedings are officially closed. End Note.)

¶2. Victims will need to apply for compensation and it will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. Victims submit their application for compensation to their prefectural public safety commission, and the government, in principal, will be able retrieve any compensation paid out from Aum. Under the new law, 20 million yen (\$188,000) will be paid to the families of those killed. Victims who do not have disabilities requiring ongoing care will receive between 100,000 yen (\$943) and 20 million yen (\$188,000).

¶3. The crimes covered under the law are considered "heinous and grave acts of terrorism" and the purpose of the law is to "provide relief to the victims to demonstrate the nation's stance of fighting against terrorism." Some of the crimes covered include the 1995 Tokyo subway attack which killed twelve people and injured more than 5,500 people, the 1994 sarin attack in Matsumoto, and the murder of anti-Aum crusader Tsutumi Sakamoto and his family.
SCHIEFFER